

Message Text

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SUBJECT: HONECKER AND ABRASIMOV AT 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
IN BRANDENBURG

REF: BERLIN 5572

1. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATION OF V-E DAY BEGAN SOME WEEKS AGO (REFTEL) FIRST
SECRETARY HONECKER HAS APPEARED OUTSIDE OF BERLIN
IN CONNECTION WITH THESE FESTIVITIES. THE OCCASION
WAS THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE FALL OF BRANDENBURG ON
THE HAVEL RIVER TO ADVANCING SOVIET FORCES AND THE
RELEASE OF PRISONERS FROM THE PRISON AT BRANDENBURG-
GOERDEN. IT WAS AT THIS PRISON THAT HONECKER HIMSELF
SPENT THE YEARS 1937 THROUGH 1945. HONECKER WAS
JOINED ON THE PLATFORM AT BRANDENBURG BY SOVIET
AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV, WHO ALSO SPOKE.

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2. HONECKER'S SPEECH PAID TRIBUTE TO

THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GERMANY (KDP) WHO HAD BEEN KILLED AT BRANDENBURG AND TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND CATHOLIC PASTORS WHO HAD ALSO GIVEN UP THEIR LIVES THERE. HONECKER STATED THAT, OF THE 300,000 KPD MEMBERS IN GERMANY DURING THE NAZI PERIOD, ABOUT 150,000 WERE THROWN INTO PRISONS OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS. IN THIS SAME CONNECTION, HONECKER ALSO PRAISED THE GREAT SACRIFICE WHICH THE SOVIET UNION HAD MADE IN THE LOSS OF AROUND 20 MILLION SOVIET CITIZENS DURING THE WAR AGAINST HITLER. THE TOUCHSTONE FOR HONECKER'S PRAISE OF THE SOVIET ARMY WAS THE STATEMENT THAT GERMAN FACISM RECEIVED ITS DEFEAT ON THE BATTLEFIELDS OF LENINGRAD, MOSCOW, STALIN-GRAD AND KURSK FROM WHICH IT WAS NEVER ABLE TO RECOVER.

3. IN HIS ADDRESS, ABRASIMOV PRAISED THE COURAGE AND STRONG CONVICTIONS OF THE LEADING KPD MEMBERS WHO SERVED AS AN EXAMPLE TO THOSE INSIDE GERMANY IN THE BATTLE AGAINST NAZISM. THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT WHICH THESE PEOPLE PROMOTED, HE SAID, GREW FROM YEAR TO YEAR UNTIL, TOGETHER WITH THE ATTACKING WAVE OF THE SOVIET ARMY, THEY BROUGHT LIBERATION THE THE GERMANY PEOPLE. ABRASIMOV PRAISED HONECKER AND OTHERS LIKE HIM WHO HAD BEEN IN PRISON DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR FOR THEIR HEROIC OPPOSITION TO FACISM.

4. COMMENT. ACCORDING TO BIOGRAPHER LIPPMANN'S ACCOUNT "HONECKER AND THE NEW POLITICS OF EUROPE"), HONECKER WAS NOT IN BRANDENBURG-GOERDEN WHEN IT WAS TAKEN BY SOVIET FORCES IN 1945, HAVING ALREADY ESCAPED AT THE END OF MARCH AND HAVING COME UNDER SHELTER OF SOME COMMUNIST COMPATRIOTS IN WHAT IS NOW EAST BERLIN. LIPPMANN NOTES THAT HONECKER WAS BROUGHT TO TRIAL IN THE PARTY AFTER THE WAR ON SUSPICION OF HAVING BEEN A COLLABORATOR DURING HIS YEARS IN PRISON. SUCH AN ACCUSATION WAS PERHAPS EASY TO MAKE AFTER THE WAR AND HONECKER APPARENTLY WAS FULLY EXONERATE. ABRASIMOV'S SPEECH GAVE CONSIDERABLE CREDIT TO THE INTERNAL GERMAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT FOR ITS ASSISTANCE IN HELPING TO DEFEAT THE HAZIS. THE APPEARANCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF HONECKER AND ABRASIMOV TOGETHER ON THE SAME PLATFORM MAY BE REPEATED IN THE COMING CELEBRATIONS IN EAST BERLIN.GROVE

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